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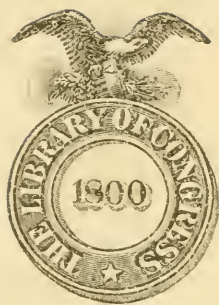
1916



A
PLACE
IN
THE SUN



GEORGE WILLIAM ALLISON



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A PLACE IN THE SUN

A PLACE IN THE SUN

GEORGE WILLIAM ALLISON

RIVERSIDE PUBLISHING COMPANY

South Bend, Indiana

1916

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1916

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\$0.50

SEP 15 1916

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*To one who cannot read this page
By reason of her youth
My daughter Clare Louise
I dedicate this book
In the hope
That she will grow
To understand her father's love*

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A PLACE IN THE SUN.

God, how men have struggled
And battled in bloody fight
To briefly stand a sturdy while
Possessing that poor eminence we call
“A place within the sun!”
To bask in that unholy light
How many men have vainly died
To push their petty prince ahead?
What a striving human herd we are!
And tho the place one may have gained,
And tho the bloody reddened light may shine
And keep the face abeam awhile
With sleek sardonic vulcan gleam, —
There always stands a shadow in the rear

An umbra strewn with bodies of the slain
Whose winds are fetid-weighed from rotting dead,
And weird with hellish curses of the dying horde
Or the agonizing cries of disappointed pain they raise;
And on either side the penumbral threats
Of clashing fighting rival arms
Of driven maddened maudlin men
Who come to take in turn each winner down
Who stands above so ill at ease
To gratify his egotistic pride and vanity
Within the envied place up in the sun!
God, we are a striving hortling human herd!

THE SUPER-MAN.

Create a self!

Attain the end for which thou'rt born;

Achieve the aim of lusty living!

Nor let the race with eager claim

For charity defeat thy course,

And hold thee down amid the horde

Of common ordinary men!

If obstacles oppose thy path,

Step not around —

But brush the paltry earth aside,

Wave the universe away

That you may pass

And yonder stand unsheathed

Of shackling arts

And skillfully contrived device,

Unbagged over-man!

THE WORLD AT THE WAILING PLACE.

From sheer ashamedness of sin
The world now seeks its weary wailing-place
To pour its grief-o'erladen soul in prayerful tears
And cry release from dismal servitude
Of gods who know not peace.
Too long alas some tempting strayed
In curiosity too close the brink
Of precipices bounding deepest hell,
When of a halt — the bank gave way,
And they went tremblingly o'ersault
Without support — wherefore we weep!
Unceasingly the sobs ascend to God!

THE TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION.

The putrid odor of decaying dead
Rises from their earthy cerements
And wafted by the fetid winds
Offensively it floats across the fields;
And even now entrained
Comes trampling thru the streets
Trailing in the triumph of the host,
And making sick the scene
Of glory-vaunting guilt!
It taints the show of triumph born of war!
The glitter and the glamor of parade
Sufficeth not to blot from memory
The curses of the murdered dead
They killed to win the field.
Call this not a triumph!
Nay, for shame! Say failure!
For they fail who win by force

And virulently vaunt a victory
Above the decomposing bodies
Or unnumbered dreamless dead!

SO THE WORLD GOES ON.

And so the world goes on.
Today to build — tomorrow to destroy!
Today to speak of brotherhood and God;
Tomorrow nations pray to Jupiter or Mars!
Not wait to pray, but eagerly,
While pushing engines of destruction
To vantage points from which
The projectiled fingers of a pained death
May reach and grasp and crush
With iron hand and rasping nails
Whole cities full of men and homes,
With treasures of labor and art!
And so the iron claw of a rabid hate
That knows no let or stay
Still grasps with pitiless greed
For the fruit of the centuries peace.
And those who spoke yester of God,

Today study tactics and field,
Issue orders, engage, and count dead,
And mutter to Mars in the mean!
And so the world goes on.
O utter ennui!

THE SERVILE THOR.

In days of yore the hills of Norseland
Heard within their yawning gulches' depths
The deafening din and rumbling roar of thunder,
As Thor the mighty strong of arm
Raised hands aloft and smote with sturdy stroke
Of hammer, blows which brot a mighty crash
And seemed to crush the souls of men,
And shatter in a thousand scattered fragments
The hardihood that feared nor man nor devil.

But now the knotted arm is bound
Which held such mighty power, —
Fettered by him who cried
And feared the awful force!
No longer free to roam the hills at will,
But work content in shop and mill,
In street, on field or sea,
To raise his busy whurr and elattered din,

To lift and bear with ease the heavy tons,
To light the darkened ways of puny men,
To flash their mystic words thru widened leagues —
Behold the mighty god who once was free,
The willing servile slave of fearless man!

A FOOL'S DREAM.

I hold within my hand the palsied, pale-sick moon
And stand beneath the hollow, starry dome
Of blue we call in ignorance the sky;
We know not what it is.
But I shall hurl this moon
With Herculean strength of arm
Against the key-star of that dome
And leave the shattered fragments
To come tumbling down
And crush the earth
And all that in it is.
What if I perish in the deal?
The melee will be great
And I shall gloat with glee
To see the pieces of the blue
Lie scattered here about
Amid the tumbled wreck of stars!

THE BRIEF SUPREMACY.

A strong sense of the incomparably serene,
The exaltation of victorious chosen few,
Crowns the hardship and toil
Of the torturous upward trails
That lead to the peaks and blue.
Undaunted by the chilly gaze of frowning cliffs,
The snarling lips of Nature curled in scorn
At the effeminacy of the weak,
But challenging the strong, —
We climbed and have achieved:
Are tasting of the joys reserved
For those who will to win
And do by sheer determination!
But as from hatred at the core
For those who prove their best,
We, standing on the summits,
Beheld them snarl the more

And prove intolerant of conquerors ;
They drove us dumbly down to valley
With our fellows far below !

How like is life !

To attain the topmost pinnacle of Fame
May be our greatly gifted human lot,
To only then retire to the humbler ranks
Of ordinary and forgotten men,
Dissatisfied the more for having tasted
Joys and conquests we could not longer own,
Or bequeath to those who come behind !

SELF-SACRIFICE

What tho I push myself to heights sublime
As fit for only super-man?
Does not the whispering pine,
Sole remnant in the wake of weilded axe,
Suffer greivously from cruel gale
Which sweeps the unprotected hillside
And its lonesome window?
Are not her branches whipped and snapped
Until the forest beauty bleakly stands
A horrid mangled ugly hag?

So alone can I arise of self,
Achieve the vaunted over-man,
With loveless crippled character:
A gaunt and barren trunk of a man
Of height enough to spare,
But lacking spread!
I cannot rise without I raise the race!

H U M A N I T Y.

I beheld a terrestrial planet
Swung far out among the spheres and space
Majestically poised and rotary,
And round the sun it swung;
Millions of beings clambered round its sides
Or tossed upon its liquid seas;
Creating or eating bread they are:
And something else. What?
Ah, there's a word I cannot meet!
They've tears and smiles,
And loves and hates,
Hopes and fears,
And wars and peace,
Deep wellings of an unsung soul, —
Yea, more than this! But what,
Exactly what, I cannot say;
Except, perhaps, they're human!

THE ETERNAL PYRAMIDS.

The rugged Cheops had only scowled;
The master builder knew his meaning well —
And urged his foremen ply their whips more freely;
The uncurled lashes snarled and snapped;
The swarthy slaves o'erstrained their tired limbs
To barely move the heavy block.
The granite mass rose slowly from the earth;
The desert sun shone hot on drifting sands;
The blurr'd horizon quavered in the atmosphere;
The sluggish Nile flowed on between its muddy banks
Adown the valley distantly to sea.
Still scowled the mighty Cheops —
Him of power — whose word is life
Or death to slaves as he alone may choose.
A dusky slave has fallen by the granite mass
Where he has lifted much on little food
Except impotent rebellious hate

That dared not risk the lash,
Or worse, a head removed!
The stinging lash brings on outcry
But a trembling quiver of the tired flesh
Beneath the place the welt appeared.
His body is removed and laid aside to die.
Another fills his place. The work goes on!
The mighty Cheops must his tomb erect
'Ere he too drops besides the rock
He could not lift alone — tho king —
Except for help of these — tho slaves.

The massive pyramid of Cheops stands
Durable above Egyptian desert sands,
A memorable monument as much to them
Who toiled with no reward save tasks and death
As 'tis to him who drove (and still some drive!)
The slaves he plied beneath his system
Before the age of justice had arrived —
If still 'tis come!

CONSCIENCE.

On the boundary of the expansive sea
One stands to watch the rolling waters heave,
To note the inward creep of tide,
The rush of waves that lash the shore,
Thrust threatening finger-rills toward ones feet.
Then ebb thru wetted glistening sands
Adown to meet the motion inward bent
Thus o'er and o'er.

So under the orbs and lispings winds of God
The tide and waves of conscience rise
And crowd and rush and lash
Remorselessly the guilty mind of man
Once he has cast up continents of crime
To impede the restless motion
Of the boundless seas of God.

LOVE CHASTISES.

As the Christ of old in righteousness indignant
Hurled his well-aimed seven woes
Against pretending Pharisees and scribes,
Then having quit the holy city
Looked backward o'er the vale and wept
They would not hear and heed his word, —
So the careful mother whips the naughty child
In cold and stern severity
Then quickly turns away to hide the growing tear
That dims the eye and blurs the vision.
Chastising love e'er suffers most itself,
And after cries, "If thou hadst known!"

THE GOTHIC PRAYER.

God help the men who utter
Long slender Gothic prayers in plaintive tones
That rise in cold grey splendor
To majestic pointed arches
Reaching toward a hollow-sounding heaven
And bring back only echoes —
Effete echoes of the prayers themselves —
Sounding empty on the sated ear;
Nor giving peace to praying souls
Of sinful sorrow-laden men,
Or such as we.

PEACE.

In the mist of the valley's summer green,
In the setting sun's golden haze

And the purple and azure and dreamy mists
Which artlessly o'er the whole scene plays, —
There ascends a column of uncurled smoke
From the stack of an unpainted home.
Not a sound or a breath on the stillness breaks
To disturb the gathering gloam, —
And God calls the picture "Peace"!

THE DESERT PRAYER.

No minaret of mosque to mark the scape ;
No sounding chant of priestly call to prayer ;
Only a solitary camel-rider,
A bowl of sapphire blue for sky,
A limitless expanse of desert sands,
That yesterday were rippled with the winds,
Now growing gold and glowing in the rising sun :
What greater summons could the Allah give
As call to prayer than this ?
Dismount and wash. The rug. The desert still.
A penitential forehead to the dust.
Allah lives, and ruleth over all :
The barren drifted desert is not lone !

I P A L N E M O A N I .

Among a host of other stern-faced gods ye stand,
Appalled by human blood and human fears;
Their green stone altars running red in blood
While human faces trickle salty tears.
For you no breast is torn or bleeding heart
Is waved toward the burning sun,
No body tumbled down the temple-steps
To sate the savage rage we shun;
No voice of priest rings out from temple-top
For you all human-kindness demonize,
No cry of waging war or tossing lottery
To bring or choose the human sacrifice
For thee alone of all the pantheon
That grace the hills of Mexico
There is no sacrifice of life or limb
That praise upon thine altars does bestow :
For thee alone there swings the burning incense

Whose aromatic fumes to thee arise
To voice the prayers of human hearts
Which would diffuse themselves thru earth and skies.
Nay, more! There blows from every fragrant blossom
Each a swaying censor which beautifies the splendid
More perfumed incense than could rise [earth,
Thru any stenchant smoke from any altar-hearth!
We grace thy name! The flowered earth gives grace!
Ipalnemoani — “by whom we live” —
We offer thee our living hearts, ‘tis more
Than all the fragrant perfumed flowers give!

AN EGYPTIAN MUMMY.

Upon those browning crumbling bones
(Now near to earthly dust
Within their dustless polished case)
Once lived the vibrant tissue
With the warmth of woman-flesh.
'Tis well the tight-wound linen
Hides what once was woman-frame from view
Since form has gone, and all is hollow mockery.
But ah, those ghastly features!
The toothless jaw has fallen from its socket
And now stands mockingly agape!
'Twas set on yestermorn in rows of pearl,
And yesterday were lips to smile and speak and kiss!
Thru the crunched bones which mark the nose
Were breathed the scents of perfume-laden air,
Whilst overhead the sutured skull there grew
The raven hair so proudly tressed.

And now below, two empty sockets
Reveal the secrets of the dusty cave
Wherein dwelt that of good and ill and all:
No longer do the sparkling eyes hide aught within
And give it sight and life!
The citadel of that is now for rent
Of other tenantry than mind.
Yet one cannot but ask
What thots and hopes, what fears and dreams
Perplexed your day or troubled sleep —
What pleasures thrilled or pains annoyed.
But rest in ageless sleep, and near the dust, —
We know you are of kind with us.

IMPATIENCE DIVINE.

O thou great infinite idea
Which impenetrates the All
Impelling on and upward
With divine impatience
And energy eternal
Everything that is
Or was or shall be
In the sum of being :
Creating active strife
And endless struggle brewing,
Burning, clamoring expression —
Impulsive force which makes all
Incline and climb, yet cringe
Attainment of the great Ideal —
Stimulate this living life
To reach and claim the power
Which lever-like will pry

The soul from lowly pits
Of lethargy wherein have lain
Too long too many souls
Of men and things and All.

A PSALM AND A FALL AFTERNOON.

Let me leave the wide road,
The hard-trodden road
Of the beaten paths of men!
Let me clamber the sagging wood-lot fence
And kick the dead leaves with my feet
In the groves of the gorgeous fall!
With the golden sun and the hazy air
To liven the day for the dying leaves,
As aflame in scarlet and gold
They cling for a last farewell
To the birds and the wind and the sky!
Let me feel the crunch of the soft mother-earth
'Neath the heel of my unhallowed shoe!
Let me reverently lean with my arms
On the old rail-fence beyond
And watch the unherded flocks,
Or scan the corn-shocks, row on row,

Sturdy guards of invincible fall !
Let me bask in the beauty of present joy,
And the sun, and the afternoon !
As waters from unfailing springs,
There wells from the depths of mind,
Mysteriously half-understood,
The words of an ancient psalm
. . . . "Thou crownest the year with thy goodness,
And the hills are girdled with joy ;
The pastures are clothed with flocks,
And the valleys are covered with grain ;
They shout for joy, and they sing."

DELIGHT.

I delight

. . . . To throw myself recklessly

Over the rocky ledge

With the slender stream

In a tenuous film of silver

And dash myself into spray,

Then reassemble and rush on.

. . . . To quietly slip with the winds

Thru the shadowed ways of the woods

And kiss the light-flower'd poppy,

Then scatter the scent o'er the fields.

. . . . To stand like the green live-oak

And let the wind run quivering thru me

And rustle the folds of my frock.

. . . . To lie like the rich brown earth

Which gathers the warmth of the sun

And feeling the glow of new-life

Born of a welcome pregnancy

Exhilarate forth in a wealth of flora.

. . . To be companionable

To earth, wind, water, and wood.

THE ROAD I CHOOSE.

I lifted up mine eyes unto the hills
And trudged with zest the upward path of youth
Ascending from the vale of infancy.
I've reached the crest of manhoods sturdy road
From here I see the path diversified —
Direct and torturous, hither and yon,
Out thru the vale and over summit
Its' various courses lead, —
Each with its hills and sunny meads to view,
But each with its petty hindrances:
I know not which way to the best —
I cannot take them all
(I say so with regret!)
So — this the road I choose
And onward trudge!
I trudge it zestful still!

THE NIGHT – WATCH.

Wearied with racking pain
Which follows the surgeons' knife,
Long thru the endless night
With its' ceaseless calm and still
I lay restlessly a-cot
Waiting complete fulfillment
Of either of two desires —
Sleep, or the dawn:
Relief from the pain of self
By sleeping forgetfulness,
Or interfusion of self in else.

MOTHER – LOVE.

Who has ever seen
The suffering of the silent mother
Who stands besides the prim-made bed
Of immaculate unruffled linen
Whereon lies the fevered brow
Of the boy she once gave birth
And felt the tears
She dared not well?
Who has ever seen
And knows not mother-love?

M O T H E R .

How beautiful

The memory

Of mother!

AFTER SUNSET — A LONE STAR BEFORE DARK.

One glimmering twinkly star
Lumines the window-scape
With its' limited gaze
From a hospital cot :
Lone star, blue sky above
Fading to pink below, —
Pink gashed with pointed gables,
Weird shapes of trees and poles :
Foot-steps below in the street,
Clang of the distant car,
Voices suppress in the hall —
Lone star twinkling over all : —
Suffer or sleep — God is near ;
The night will pass
And morning will bring the dawn.

THE CLOUD OF FLESH.

The cloud of flesh which wrapped your hidden form
Was precipitated by the chilly blast of death
And leaves your truest self untrammelled now
To stand forth sheathed with only glory
In the light of glowing noontide sun.

IN THE MUSIC - ROOM.

I beheld the sun-lit room,
The polished instrument,
Brown case and ivoried keys —
And you —
With unfolded sheet of notes :
A touch of slender practised hands
And room and keys and page
Fade into a maze of mist and melody —
Into music-mist and you.

DESCRIPTIVE MUSIC.

My rocking ceased ;

And soon the chair was still :

For from the polished instrument

With noiseless ivoried keys

There came a scene of sound —

.

On either side the tree-clad banks

Of a sun-lit woodland stream :

And down between the sound-banks

Came a rippling melody of laughter

As the brook of notes unceasingly

Babbled on from side to side

Slipped by moss-topped stones,

Fanned by wood-flower-scented breeze,

Heralded by sun and fluttered shadow.

The sound-stream gaily triple-trickles on.

.

A folded page . . . A dying chord . . .

I closed my eyes and rocked again.

REPLY TO OBSCENITY.

Dame Nature has a shame that's all her own —
Nay, shame is not the word
For shame means moral turpitude
And morals are not hers.
We'll say not shame, but modesty
Which shrinks from filthy show;
Not to deceive or lead astray,
Disown the wrong she knows is there —
But not only to put it forward.
Nor is she less strong that this is so,
Less worthy of the worlds' respect:
Virtue lies not in display of passion;
Sturdiness is not of stallions' fire.
She need not be too nice to not be rude;
Nor need be rude and boorish lest too nice
And being nice — too weak!
The ivy-tendrils, leaves, and vine

Trail o'er the crumbled ruined walls of weakened men
And hide to beautify decaying shame ;
The lichen hides the harshness of the limestone tomb ;
The mats of moss conceal and glorify
The dismal dreary swamps of putrid mud ;
The southern jessamine o'erclimbers green
The blasted pine of woodland solitudes
That else were shameful.
So need not man be hesitating to avoid immodesty,
Nor need be rude to prove him man ;
Display the base to prove him bold ;
He need not tell or sing a song of shame —
Too many things too better to be told.

THE GROWTH OF AN IDEAL.

Whether from the slime of ocean ooze
Emerged the germ which generated life
Of man and fish and bird,
Or whether God or gods created him and them
Complete in form, concerns us not;
We only know he is and they.
We see his stooping form emerge
From dismal dark of dusty cave
Half-erect, low-browed and stern,
With pudgy belly and unkempt hair;
Killer of the beasts, yet one of them;
Carver of the bones whose flesh he gnaws;
This once the thing that now is man!

And then from Tigris Valley and from Nile
We learn of cities walled and strong,
Of waging wars, and conquests
Carried into dim and distant lands:

And then the seas were won from gods of fear,
And more fleets plowed the blue
Than tilled the black and fertile earth.
Anon Rome dons the warriors helmet
Worn by Greece of yore
And subjugates the earth;
And underneath her tutelage the nations rise
And supercede their patron.
But all the while the cave-man grows
And sloughs his stooping hairy form
And bestial code of life.
Leaves caves and beasts to guard
The low-browed skulls of yore
While he ascends
To be the lordly democrat of all the earth,
Potent over elements and sea and air,
Tho holding still the unreached folds
Of rich ideals in view.
It doth not yet appear
What he shall be!

BEYOND THE GRASP.

He walked along the rocky ledge
That grooved the hip of earth :
The crevices above which gathered soil
Gave root to hardy flowers of the wild,
And in the suasive July sun
Each stalk was toppled heavily
With its load of floral gold.
The heart and hand were tempted
To garner in a sheaf.
But those he held in hand seemed
Not quite the peer of those beyond :
Some missing petal, dull of shade,
Or some lesser fault in all.
But ah, — one just above the reach
Seemed flawless — perfect in every line,
The one desired blossom of them all !

So is it ever thus in life:
The thing we hold in hand
Seem's less than what's beyond the grasp,
And leaves us discontent
To long and strain for the ideal
Which is ever only just beyond!

THE BEGINNING OF THE DANCE.

(Japanese Legend.)

Whence came the dance?
Who first discovered beauty
In the form of rhythms' song?
Who felt the joyous stir,
The thrill of pulsing sentiment,
That swaying with the trees,
The babbling stream of brook,
The unseen breath of wind
Make mighty moving melody?

The fathers of the race reply:

On the morning of creation
Ere the mists of time arose
And the grasses of the earth
Were sparkled with the dew,
When the world was fresh-created

And the sun was bright and new,

It happened so

Thru the woods of gladsome springtime
Tripped a faun abrim with life;
Trees and shrubs full-budded
Awoke a happy thrill of soul
Flowers called unceasing
And the sweetness of their odor gave delight:
The sun gave energy to thot and soul.
One beautiful pure blossom
Defiled but by an hours sun
Seized his soul, and drew it out
And up, above his utmost reach;
Its whiteness dazzled and entranced —
He sprang to grasp and hold it,
But when the firm earth left his feet,
He knew the dance and kept it
Tho the blossom he might covet held its place.

And still the stream and the tree-tops,
The wind and the waves of the wild
Dance and teach this rythmic joy
To the faun, the nymph, and the child.

THE FLOWING SPRING.

Below a grass-clothed knoll
Where grow the green live-oaks,
There flows a cooling spring
Out o'er the lap of limestone
Roof above and shelf below.
Quietly it ever flows
Out and on,
The stillness only broken
By the gurgling of the little stream
As laughing at its pebbly path
And the clear-throated song
Of a lone bird above.
It is a spring of magic mystery
To kiss the thirsty roots
Of stream-side plants and reeds
With healing soothing lips,
While mirroring the sun.

My mind is a flowing spring :
A magic mystery of thot
Rising from unseen sources
And moving stilly out and on
To kiss with fluid lips
The roots of reasoned order
In the universe of thirst
For explanation of its being,
And the stream reflects (sometimes refracts)
The illuminating rays of reason
Which emanate from the divine.

THE CINEMATOGRAPH.

Seated in a cushioned opera-chair
Within the cheap theatre of reflection
I watched the lighted action on the screen.
The sound of voice was silent
Save the dreary hum of whispered comment
And the faulty melody of woe or joy,
Of gleeful ragged discontent
Or of sullen pathos
As mayhap fit the action
Which alone disturbed the tranquilized occasion.
The reel rolls on — the length of memory.
The film of deeds once done
Is re-enacted here for ruthless rumination.
The alternating flickered light
For days of animated action,
And an instantaneous flutter for the nights
Reweave before my eyes a film of life

For solemn retrospection.

The hero of the tale secures award;

The villain takes his due.

I sigh the sight is so soon done.

A click! the picture's o'er,

And ended in a blinding glare of light!

I rise to go

A few more days may flutter out

The action of my lifes enacted tale;

A few more flickered scenes of shortened nights

May intersperse the whole

While I retain my seat

And see my actions featured

By the cinematograph of God.

.
And then will come the glare!

THE CLOUD WITHIN THE POOL.

Beneath the fluttering shadows of the gorge
In the cooling freshness of the springtime green
The white-flowered trillium topples drowsily ;
In the wetness of last seasons fallen leaves,
Modest and almost quite unseen, there grows
The wild ginger with its richness folded in corolla
Of a humble brown. The spatter of a nearby waterfall,
The rustle of the newly opened leaves,
The merry chatter of returning feathered friends,
Melt into indistinctness. My thought is elsewhere.
A convenient moss-rugged log invites to rest and meditation
On the wonder and the glory of the opening day
In this forenoon of the year.
The narrow streamlet at my feet in freshet swept
Its limestone path and left a pool
Of clear and quiet limpid water
Wherein my gaze, invited, falls.

I note the fossiled coral in the pool
And send my meditation to the days
When ocean ooze and clamminess here reigned supreme,
And laid this down to keep until today.
And centuries of earth are melted from my mind.
But deeper down it seems I see
A framed expanse of clear unmeadowed blue:
And even now far down there moves
A silvered fleece, ungilded by tradition,
Which sweeps the bottom from the stream
And leaves a vacant blurr where had been
Trees and pool and rocks and leaves
And time — and I'm alone with God
In reverie and fantasy and dream.

BRUCE ISMAY'S SOLILIQUEY.

The melancholy wind unceasingly
Sweeps the barren waste of unplowed field
From rocky shore and restless dreaded sea
And seeks me out upon the dreary land
To speak the silent voices of the dead :
The dead the deep insatiate sea devoured —
Some unprepared, but others brave —
Tho dead are all thru fault of mine . . .

Deep down they lie,
Deep down they lie,
Deep down in the surly sea
And their voices cry,
Their voices cry,
They cry from the deeps at me!

The ocean tosses up into the wind
With the constant heave of her surging breast

The agony-cry of those who drowned
When my ship went down in the sea
With a hole in her side two fathom wide
And a half-ship-line in length :
Yet still from the sea they cry at me
In the restless voice of the wind . . .

“Deep down we lie
Deep down we lie,
Deep down in the surly sea!”
Oh their voices cry,
Their voices cry!
How they cry from the deeps at me!

A PILE OF STONES ON MT. CHEYENNE.

“What’s this, a devil-tree
With piles of stones about its trunk,
Each stone a memorable token
Of imprecation uttered here
Upon some foul spirit?”
“Not so — for here lies one
Who loved these crooning pines,
These rugged cliffs of Mt. Cheyenne
And prolonged her ebbing life
Within the folds of each.
She’s buried here at her request;
And these stones are each a token
Of the love that someone bore
The holder of a pen that moveth not
To write a line forever more.
A pile of stones beneath a pine;
But ah, could one discern

The pile of pleasant memories
Of hosts who held her dear,
‘Twould far outweigh the weight
Of stones thus builded here
In crude unlettered altar!’

THE OLD MAN AT THE DOOR.

He sat upon the sloping stoop
In front the sagging door
Which stood ajar invitingly
And yet forbidding trespass
On that sanctity
He called in courtesy his home.
The companion of his latter days,
A mongrel dog, drowsed near his feet.
His home-made cane of cherry-limb
Flecked uncertainly a loosened pebble
From the sometime graveled walk.
Box-elders shade the humble door,
And stray flickers of the risen sun
Flutter thru the scene uncertainly.
A clump of untrimmed lilac at the gate,
A few old-fashioned lilies and some bouncing Bet,
'Volunteered,' suffice for flowers,

Save for the straggling rose
From whose blossomed pink,
Dew-weighted, there falls a faded pedal.
The old man waked with dawn,
But shares not the shaded songs
Of rustic home-yard birds,
Noisy chatter of the sparrow
Or the ruddy-breasted robins' cheerful church, —
Thinks not of mid-morning sun
Nor notes the sparkling dew
Upon the unbrowsed grass
Within the apple-orchard lot
Where frolic pastured calves
With young bucolic lack of grace.
All unmindful of the teeming world about him,
Absently he sits with lowered head
Fumbling with his homely cane,
And dreams. Not toil, not quests,
Not seeds and plantings, nor of harvests

Is his mist of mind this morn;
Too late today for these to be.
But dim reckonings of those might-have-beens
That had wrought for better or for worse:
Thanks for the ills the flesh escaped
And kept the humble spirit free,
Regrets for the goods ungrasped
And sorrows that their loss entailed.

The wrinkled smile that played about the lips,
The quiet luster of the aging eyes,
Showed well the way the balance cast.
My tread upon the walk disturbed his reverie;
He rose, and came out in the sun;
His grey locks glowed with glory in the sheen.

SOLITUDE DISTURBED.

A little glade of water in a wood,
Wherein there stood a crane with lifted foot
And bill at rest upon her breast,
Reflected trunks of trees in and beyond.
The dead leaves of last season rustle
In the wind that croons thru unleafed trees.
The afternoon grows late, the sun grows large,
The evening hush of solitude comes on
More rapidly than coming of the spring.
The crackle of a twig beneath my foot
Provoked a sudden inharmonious start:
The awkward crane ungainly dropped her foot
And clumsily then flopped her way awood.
I might regret intrusion on this solitude
Had I not seen a woodland glade,
A lazy crane, the drear gaunt trees,
And heard last seasons' leaves
Arustle in the wind.

A ROBIN IN WINTER.

With the shrubs frost-tinseled grey
All cottoned o'er with snow
And the rousing sun ascending
From the ruddy right of east
And setting all the world agleam
In a glorious sheen of diamonds
Riotously scattered on the breast
Of the white-apparalled earth, .
There comes a sense of vigor
As of rejuvenating spring.
The morning air is not too chill
For friends to gayly greet good-morn
With merry voice and hearty cheer.
But no voice so unexpected
Nor so lovely, full, and clear
As when a strayling robin
Hops without its hiding

Artlessly beyond the clump
Of leafless lilac shrub,
And challenges your friendship
With a "Church! Church! Church!"
O you ruddy breasted robin,
Spring's anticipated peer,
Your full-throated church of greeting
Wins your welcome for the year!

DIVERGENT PATHS

“No, boys, I’ve quit!

Damned if I’ll be more besot

And drunken as a hog unpenned —

Or lewd as dog on city streets!

I’ll taste the vent my stomach vomits

No more, I say! The bleary eyes,

The sick headache, the dismal shame

Of hunting jobs I cannot get

Nor hold so long as drink has hold of me!

My God men, I wakened in an alley yesterday,

And say, — a sorry sight!

My hat was gone, my trousers torn,

My suit was old tho new;

And money? I could not have paid

For breakfast had I wanted one,

Tho paid myself the day before.

But say, when I got home

The womans eyes were red
All ringed around with black.
I knew she'd seen no bed that night,
And cried her poor eyes out for drunken me!
The kids were up, and dressed —
Glad to see me come home — sober —
Too often drunk I'd come
And beaten them — curse my beer-soaked hide
And all my drunken ugliness!
'You're a pretty sight!' was all the woman said,
But Bill, you know how your wife looks at you —
She looked at me — and say!
I broke right down and cried!
She loved me, boys, for what I had been,
And not for what I was;
Same's your wife loves you too,
And cries all night long for you
When you're out on a spree.
And boys, I tell you now, I'm thru:

No more of this for me!
I'm going to be clean
And give my wife a man
That's fit to be the father of her kids;
And buy her grub and duds,
Instead of tears and rags
And foul-mouthed curses!
Excuse me, boys, I'm quit! Good-by!"

He walked away. The others walked,
But toward another place than home;
One looked as tho to follow him,
Then caught the others eye,
And muttered, "Well, I'll be damned!"
The other said, "D'you 'spose he will?"

H O P E .

(After the painting by George Frederick Watts.)

Hope took up the harp of life
And gently thrummed its strings
As suited to her mood.
The first one rudely snapped,
And left her song without accompaniment.
The second, and the third, the same!
Undaunted, Hope then lifts the song again,
And plucks the fateful final cord —
Her disappointed ear athrill to hear
As, blinded, bending low she waits to learn
Whether the final string gives melody,
Or lets the soul within her die
With broken interrupted song!
Crouching o'er the instrument of broken life
On top a melancholy-looking earth,
Expectantly she waits to thrum the final cord!
We gladly pluck the string with Hope!

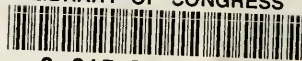
NATURE'S ALCHEMY.

What magic alehemy is this
To reach down in the unattractive clay by root,
And grasp a grain or two of earth,
Transport its weight above
And spread it out beneath the sun in bits,
All colored gay with careful nicety?
Sometimes arrayed in gaudy floral petal,
Mayhap in deep-hued leaf, or curling tendril;
Or else, more wonder still,
A delicate aroma exhaled to scent the air
And draw a pollenizing agent to your purpose!
I do not understand but only know,
This alchemy of Nature and her God.
It baffles thot, defies experiment.

THOTS AFAR.

I send my thots far off
Unto the dim distant edge of the universe
All golden-rimmed about with stars,
And ask them on return,
“What is beyond?”

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